

SURA Relations Network Proposal

Background:

A critical component of SURA's work is engaging in external relations activities which support its programs. Currently, this is primarily a staff and consultant activity aimed at coordinating and executing ad hoc efforts with government, corporate, and related stakeholders as well as the media. (e.g., Lobbying for DOE/Office of Science, NOAA funding, and Commonwealth support of JLab programs; media relations which promote SURA initiatives.) Beyond these targeted efforts, SURA maintains aggressive outreach with organizations (e.g., SGA, SGPB, COVITS, VRTAC, HRTC) which directly or indirectly complement and support our programs.

SURA is also involved in coalition efforts which complement or mirror our boarder efforts to "enhance the research capacity within the region and nation." These include membership and/or work with a number of or organizations including ASTRA, TFFAI, AAAS, APS, CORE and JOI. These efforts have been primarily focused on support of the American Competitiveness Initiative (i.e., Administration and Congressional plans to double basic research funding in seven years) and authorization and funding of IOOS (codifying a unified national ocean research program.)

Opportunity for Improvement:

Our current understanding of university relations activities range from **broad efforts** to support expanded research funding to **individual objectives** which seek funding for programs and initiatives that are institution-specific. For instance, universities utilize their membership and affiliation with organization like AAU, NASULGC and AAAS to support those broad efforts. And universities obviously pursue their individual objectives within their own federal and state government stakeholders.

In between these two extremes may exist an opportunity for networking and working together in support of an agenda that is more focused on a regional level for SURA member institutions.

Potential Organizing Event:

In order to test the feasibility of developing a network among the external relations professionals within the SURA region, the following event is outlined as a possible opportunity for collaboration:

<i>SURA External Relations Forum (Spring 2007)</i>	
10:00 a.m.	Registration and Welcome
10:15 a.m.	Overview of SURA
10:30 a.m.	Panel on ACI & the Research Agenda in 110 th Congress (Congressional Staff and Research Funding Advocates)
11:30 a.m.	Presentation by Southern Governors' Association
12 noon	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Participant Discussion of Institutional Priorities
1:30 p.m.	Open Discussion on Opportunity for SURA Relations Network
2:30 p.m.	Adjourn